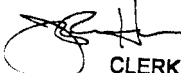


FILED

AUG 06 2008


CLERK

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
District of South Dakota
515 Ninth Street, Room 318
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701-2626

KAREN E. SCHREIER
Chief Judge

Phone 605-399-6020
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August 5, 2008

The Honorable James B. Loken
Chief Judge
U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit
11 W. U.S. Courthouse
300 South Fourth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1329

Re: CJA Voucher of Robert Van Norman for representation of Yuri Chachanko
CR.06-50117-01

Dear Chief Judge Loken:

Enclosed is a CJA voucher submitted by Robert Van Norman for his representation of Yuri Chachanko together with a letter explaining the complexities of the case.

This case presents very unusual and complex circumstances. Yuri Chachanko was one of two defendants charged in a fifteen-count Indictment including Interference with Commerce by Robbery, Possession of a Stolen Firearm, Felon in Possession of a Firearm, Possession of a Short Shotgun, and Use and Carrying a Firearm During a Violent Felony. The charges in the Indictment occurred during a three-month period in 2004 involving five-separate gunpoint robberies of casinos located in the state of South Dakota, one in Rapid City, three in Sioux Falls and one in Watertown. In addition the defendant was incarcerated at the Montana State Penitentiary in Deer Lodge regarding two casino robberies in Montana.

George Grassby, Assistant Federal Public Defender, was appointed to represent the defendant on January 11, 2007. The defendant entered into a plea agreement and pled guilty to Count II of the Indictment on November 1, 2007. The Court accepted the guilty plea and scheduled the sentencing for January 28, 2008.

The defendant filed a Motion to Withdraw Guilty Plea on November 7, 2007. The basis for the withdrawal was the government's alleged breach of an element of the plea agreement, i.e., that the defendant would be held at the Meade County Jail in Sturgis, South Dakota, pending sentencing. The defendant did not reference this agreement during the plea hearing.

The defendant had earlier requested to be transferred to the Minnehaha County Jail in Sioux Falls rather than the Pennington County Jail in Rapid City. His family lived in Sioux Falls and could not afford to travel to Rapid City for visitation. The motions were denied.

Chief Judge Loken
May 22, 2006
Page 2

The Memorandum in Support of the Motion to Withdraw Guilty Plea stated the defendant was so desperate to get out of the Pennington County Jail, he was willing to do anything to get moved, including pleading guilty. The memorandum went on to state that the level of the defendant's distress was so great that he was placed on suicide watch at the Pennington County Jail. However, after the change of plea hearing, the Meade County Jail refused the transfer because they did not have the resources to deal with a prisoner on suicide watch. The defendant claimed his judgment was severely impaired and he was not capable of voluntarily signing the Plea Agreement and Statement of Factual Basis, or changing his plea to guilty.

The first evidentiary hearing on this issue was held on January 31, 2008. The defendant demanded that his attorney testify as to the agreement with the government and the USMO. Over the government's objection, the Court ordered the defendant could call his attorney as a witness. Because Mr. Grassby testified, he was dismissed as defense counsel. It was now necessary to appoint new counsel.

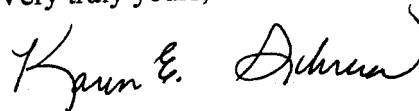
I believed it was essential to appoint a seasoned criminal defense attorney to deal with the many and complicated issues of this case. Mr. Van Norman was contacted and accepted the appointment. Mr. Van Norman represented the defendant at the evidentiary hearing and the defendant was allowed to withdraw his guilty plea. The case was scheduled for trial.

Mr. Van Norman began his representation by reconstructing events four years after the events charged in the Indictment. Witnesses were located in Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Iowa, Minnesota and Indiana. He also had to work with law enforcement reports from the FBI, ATF, South Dakota DCI, Montana DCI, Rapid City, Sioux Falls and Watertown Police Departments. Finally, the defendant continued on suicide watch at the Pennington County Jail for a considerable period of time.

The defendant did enter into a plea agreement with the government. He entered a plea and was sentenced on July 10, 2008.

Mr. Van Norman has expended an immense amount of time and resources in order to prepare this case for trial and provide his client with an adequate defense. This case has been a drain on his firm as it required Mr. Van Norman to devote much of his time to this single case. I have no reason to doubt the accounting submitted by counsel and fully approve the amount requested.

Very truly yours,



Karen E. Schreier
Chief District Judge

Enclosures